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CURRENT LITERATURE

BOOK REVIEWS

The study of plants

WOODHEAD¹ has published an elementary textbook of botany which seems to possess several features deserving better things than this tardy notice. It is a pleasure to note that emphasis is placed upon the work of plants and their relation to the habitat. Form is considered in relation to function, and the amount of microscopic work is reduced to a minimum. The book is divided into 5 parts, the first being devoted to the structure and function of the vegetative organs, occupying 150 pages. About half as much space is devoted to the reproductive organs, and here, as before, attention is confined to seed plants. The next 100 pages contain a characterization of the great groups of systematic botany, including a special consideration of trees and shrubs. The final portion is an introduction to the study of plant communities, including those of the roadside and cultivated fields. One of the commendable features of the book is the choice of so much material from the common plants of the field and wayside. It is a relief to see such a large number of new illustrations, including some good photomicrographs replacing the stock figures that reappear so persistently in most textbooks.

The final chapters are well organized to introduce the concepts and principles of plant associations, and possess the further advantage that the examples are chosen from the vegetation of the British Isles, thus affording an opportunity of following principles involved rather than copying directly the lessons outlined in the text. This among other things will certainly make the book indispensable to the teacher in search of new ideas and fresh exercises with which to enliven his present program.

It would not be difficult to find points to be criticized, but they are not on the whole serious defects. As an example, there is the use of "abnormal forms" to describe roots that are not of the most common fibrous type. The difference in the terminology from that commonly used in this country would probably be a serious difficulty in introducing it as a text for class use, but as a book of secondary reference and as a source of different ideas and new material it should not be overlooked.—GEO. D. FULLER.

¹ WOODHEAD, T. W., *The study of plants; an introduction to botany and plant ecology.* 8vo. pp. 424. *figs.* 258. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1915. \$1.40.